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Fourth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia

I. Introduction

1. By its resolution 1509 (2003) of 19 September 2003, the Security Council established the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) for a period of 12 months and requested me to report every 90 days on the implementation of the Mission's mandate. The present report was prepared pursuant to that resolution and covers developments since my report of 26 May 2004 (S/2004/430).

II. Deployment of the Mission

2. During the reporting period, UNMIL consolidated its presence throughout the country, creating the security conditions necessary for the implementation of its mandate. In June, a Senegalese battalion was deployed to Harper and Plibo in Maryland County in Sector 4. In August, a third Ethiopian battalion joined the Mission and was deployed to Sector 4, enabling the Ethiopian troops deployed at Greenville, Sinoe County and River Cess County to rejoin their battalions in the north of the country. The deployment of the Senegalese and Ethiopian troops to Sector 4 in the south-east has significantly improved the capacity of UNMIL to monitor the border with Côte d'Ivoire and the coastal regions of Grand Kru and Maryland counties. Additionally, a Senegalese level II medical unit deployed in Harper is providing additional medical support to units deployed in the somewhat inaccessible north-eastern areas of the country.

3. The Pakistani battalion which deployed to Lofa County in April has since expanded its area of operations to include Zorzor, a town located approximately 70 km south of Voinjama on the Liberia-Guinea border. With this expansion, UNMIL has established a strong presence in the area along the Guinean border previously occupied by the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD). An additional Pakistani company will be deployed shortly to Foya, west of Voinjama. As at 30 August, the total troop strength of the Mission stood at 14,665. A force communications squadron is at present being generated which, following its deployment, will bring the Mission up to its authorized strength of 15,000 troops.

4. As at 30 August, the strength of the UNMIL civilian police component stood at 1,090: 600 civilian police officers, 10 correctional officers and 4 formed police units from Jordan, Nepal and Nigeria, with a combined strength of 480. It is

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expected that the civilian police component will attain its full strength of 1,115 personnel in the next few months.

5. During the reporting period, policing activities in the interior of the country were significantly enhanced by the deployment of two formed police units from Nepal and Nigeria to Buchanan and Gbarnga, respectively. They are providing increased tactical support to the civilian police teams and the Liberian National Police in these counties. In addition to Monrovia, the Roberts International Airport and the Free Port of Monrovia, UNMIL civilian police personnel are now deployed in 22 outlying areas, including Gbarnga, Kakata, Tubmanburg, Zwedru, Saniquelle, Bo, Robertsport, River Cess, Totota, Carryesburg, Voinjama, Greenville, Salala, Ganta, Harper, Tapeta, Harbel, Yekepa, Saclepea, Loguato and Zorzor. Deployments, which are expected to coincide with UNMIL military deployments, will continue to the remaining sites in the coming months.

III. Security situation and implementation of the ceasefire

6. The overall security situation in Liberia remained calm during the reporting period, although there were a few minor skirmishes and incidents, primarily related to the protracted intra-faction dispute within LURD. The ceasefire established pursuant to the 17 June 2003 Agreement has generally continued to hold. Disarmament is nearing completion and UNMIL has continued searches aimed at curbing the illegal movement of weapons and ammunition across the country. In July, a large quantity of arms and ammunition was confiscated during checkpoint and search-and-seizure operations in central Liberia. UNMIL is also continuing to conduct regular land and air patrols to monitor the situation along the borders.

7. At the same time, there has been an increase in minor crimes and civil unrest, particularly in Monrovia, where many disarmed ex-combatants have moved. However, the security situation around the city has improved overall, primarily owing to the presence of UNMIL troops and the collaborative activities of the UNMIL civilian police and the Liberian National Police, who, together with UNMIL formed police units, continue to conduct robust joint patrols throughout the capital. These patrols have successfully quelled demonstrations staged by ex-combatants and other protestors, which have at times turned violent.

8. There has been an increase in criminal activity and violent incidents in some areas in the interior of the country. For example, illegal activities, notably looting, have been rife at the dockyard in the southern port town of Greenville. On 9 June in Gbarnga, a fight between two men escalated into a large riot, which led to the death of one person when UNMIL troops were compelled to resort to the use of force to disperse the crowd. While UNMIL troops have been able to deal effectively with such incidents, their increased frequency in recent months is a source of concern. Other areas, particularly where UNMIL troops have yet to deploy, remain prone to civil unrest. This problem is linked in part to growing frustration among the combatants who are still awaiting the commencement of the disarmament and demobilization programme in the outlying counties and those awaiting the start of the rehabilitation and reintegration programme in their chosen communities. For example, prior to UNMIL troop deployment and the start of the disarmament and demobilization exercise in the south-east of the country, there were reports of localized looting and harassment of civilians by combatants from the Movement for

Democracy in Liberia (MODEL). Meanwhile, on 17 July, armed LURD combatants looted foodstuffs intended for a food distribution programme from a warehouse near Gbah, a village close to the Sierra Leonean border. There have also been reports of assaults on personnel from non-governmental organizations in the same area and of the re-establishment of some illegal checkpoints, which UNMIL troops have acted swiftly to remove. In Tapeta, Zwedru, Harper, Greenville, River Cess and Monrovia, ex-combatants have continued to extort money from the locals.

9. Although there have been no major skirmishes between the armed groups, the protracted intra-faction disputes within LURD continue to create tension and still pose a threat to the steady progress being made in the peace process. The internal divisions worsened on 3 June, when the so-called LURD "Military High Command", loyal to Aisha Conneh announced the suspension of Sekou Damate Conneh as Chairman of the group, a move which Sekou Damate Conneh, who was in Senegal at the time, quickly rejected. In early June, the LURD National Executive Council named Chayee Doe as Sekou Damate Conneh's successor. However, Doe died shortly thereafter while undergoing surgery abroad. Kabineh Jan'eh, Minister of Justice in the National Transitional Government of Liberia, was subsequently declared the Acting Chairman of LURD, and, on 27 July, he was declared its Chairman, following an election conducted by some LURD elements.

10. The divisions within LURD have resulted in incidents outside the homes of several of its leaders, which have involved seizure of vehicles, kidnappings and also shootings. On 2 August, confrontations erupted between opposing elements when a group which does not support Sekou Conneh stole a car from a Conneh loyalist. On 3 August, several LURD ex-combatants attacked the houses of the Minister of Justice and of a former LURD military commander. Both incidents were brought under control with the assistance of UNMIL formed police units and troops. Sekou Conneh's return to Monrovia on 4 August further heightened the growing tensions. On 4 August, the Force Commander of UNMIL held separate meetings with representatives of both factions within LURD at which he warned them against inciting their followers to violence and indicated that UNMIL would take firm action to quell any disturbances. UNMIL has continued to engage in dialogue with the opposing LURD elements.

IV. Monitoring the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement

11. The mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 18 August 2003, namely the Joint Monitoring Committee, the Implementation Monitoring Committee and the International Contact Group on Liberia, have continued to meet regularly. The Joint Monitoring Committee, which is chaired by the UNMIL Force Commander, held three meetings during the reporting period to assess compliance by LURD, MODEL and the former Government of Liberia forces with the ceasefire. It has continued to serve as a useful forum for monitoring the ceasefire, maintaining dialogue among the three factions and facilitating contacts between UNMIL and the factions' military commanders. Discussions have focused on ceasefire violations and disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration, as well as cross-border movement of arms and ammunition. The Committee has noted that some commanders and

combatants have been selling weapons to non-combatants and that the three armed groups are still reluctant to surrender some of their heavy weapons. The Committee also noted that there had been some cross-border movements of arms and ammunition. UNMIL has continued to advocate against the smuggling of arms into the country and has urged faction leaders to prevail on ex-combatants to desist from violent demonstrations.

12. The Implementation Monitoring Committee, which is chaired by the Special Representative of the Executive Secretary of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), held its fourth and fifth meetings on 18 June and 17 August, respectively. During the latter meeting, the Committee reviewed the progress made in the peace process and also discussed the intra-faction dispute within LURD. In this regard, the Committee agreed that, in accordance with the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, the factions would cease to exist as military forces after the completion of the disarmament and demobilization exercise.

13. The International Contact Group on Liberia has continued to work closely with UNMIL and ECOWAS to move the peace process forward. On 10 May, the Group met in London and exchanged views on issues related to the disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration programme and the preparation and coordination of elections. In June, at the request of the Chairman of the National Transitional Government of Liberia, Gyude Bryant, the Group held two special meetings to look into allegations made by Charles Bennie, the Transitional Government's Commissioner of Customs and a senior LURD official, that the revenues received by the Transitional Government were not being properly accounted for. It was agreed that Commissioner Bennie and his colleagues should provide proof of their statements that the Transitional Government had received $48.2 million in revenue between November 2003 and May 2004. The Group subsequently agreed to inform Chairman Bryant that it did not have the technical expertise to make a determination on the financial documentation provided by Commissioner Bennie. On 7 July, the Group held a regular meeting to review various aspects of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

14. The monitoring mechanisms have noted that the National Transitional Government of Liberia and the National Transitional Legislative Assembly continue to face many challenges in the discharge of their responsibilities. There are ongoing disputes over government posts which have made it difficult for the Transitional Government to function as a cohesive administration. Serious challenges also remain regarding strengthening capacity in several areas pertaining to State administration. In July, the representative of the All Liberian Coalition Party was inducted as the 75th of the 76 members of the National Transitional Legislative Assembly. UNMIL will provide support for an election to be held on 6 October to fill the remaining vacant seat, allocated to Grand Kru County.

V. The disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration programme

15. Since the relaunching of the disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration programme on 15 April, disarmament and demobilization in Liberia have progressed steadily. During the reporting period, the third phase of the programme got under way, with disarmament being carried out in several remote

border areas of the country. New cantonment sites were opened in Zwedru on 9 July (for MODEL) and Ganta on 14 August (for the former Government of Liberia forces). In the meantime, disarmament and demobilization operations at the cantonment sites at Gbarnga (for LURD) and Buchanan (for MODEL) were suspended on 5 July and 26 July respectively, upon the completion of combatant caseloads in those areas. New sites in Saniquelle, Voinjama and Harper are planned to be opened during September.

16. During July, ex-combatants from the Camp Scheiffelin caseload who disarmed in December 2003 were formally demobilized in Buchanan and the "VOA" camp near Monrovia, although approximately 1,411 of them did not present themselves. UNMIL is currently finalizing the modalities and arrangements for payment of the second tranche of the transitional safety-net allowance of $150 to each demobilized ex-combatant.

17. As at 30 August, a total of 71,000 combatants had been disarmed since December 2003. These figures include 12,598 women, 4,884 boys and 1,356 girls. As at the same date, some 21,000 weapons had been surrendered, together with 5,265,792 rounds of small arms ammunition and 22,276 pieces of unexploded ordnance (including rocket-propelled grenades, mortar shells and hand grenades). Some 82 per cent of the weapons surrendered are rifles and semi-automatic machine guns.

18. By 30 August, UNMIL had registered 530 foreign combatants: 5 from Burkina Faso, 10 from Ghana, 259 from Guinea, 111 from Côte d'Ivoire and 145 from Sierra Leone. It is believed that the actual number of foreign combatants who have disarmed is higher than those registered, as many did not provide their true citizenship at the time of disarmament, possibly because of security concerns.

19. UNMIL is actively working with United Nations agencies to strengthen the linkages between the reintegration of ex-combatants and internally displaced persons and refugees who are returning to their communities. As at 19 August, five reintegration projects targeting 6,806 ex-combatants in Montserrado, Margibi and Bong counties were being implemented by non-governmental organizations funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration Trust Fund. Three additional projects financed from the Trust Fund, targeting the reintegration of 2,000 ex-combatants, will be launched soon. In addition, more than 2,000 ex-combatants have registered for enrolment in educational institutions for the academic year beginning in October. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is also implementing a programme to reintegrate ex-combatants and returnees into their communities by addressing the critical infrastructure needs through community-based work brigades. A further programme targets women and children associated with armed groups, and their families. Between them these programmes are expected to benefit some 10,000 ex-combatants and a further 10,000 civilians. However, the implementation of the programme is proceeding at a very slow pace owing to inadequate funding.

VI. Support for security sector reform and the rule of law

20. In recent months, several core initiatives undertaken by UNMIL regarding the reform of the Liberian security sector have begun to bear fruit. The Liberian

National Police Academy was reopened on 12 July by Chairman Bryant and training commenced for a first group of 132 cadets in July and a further 300 in August. The cadets, comprising internal applicants from the Liberian National Police, as well as external candidates, were thoroughly screened and vetted during the recruitment process. The three-month training programme provides both classroom and field training. Additional funding will be required for the rehabilitation of the Academy and the expansion of its capacity so that the current intake of 150 recruits per session can be increased to 600. The expansion would help ensure that a projected 1,800 officers will be trained before the national elections in October 2005.

21. The recruitment drive for the new police service is continuing. Some 31 per cent of the 1,839 application forms distributed nationwide have been returned for processing and 385 Liberian National Police personnel have been identified to undergo the selection process for entry into the Academy. The UNMIL gender component is working closely with the UNMIL civilian police on ensuring that at least 15 per cent of the candidates selected are women. The registration of Liberian law enforcement personnel is also proceeding on schedule; 6,536 personnel had been registered by mid-August.

22. UNMIL has continued to consult with representatives of the national legal and judicial system, United Nations agencies, interested international partners and civil society on ways and means of strengthening the judicial system. In this regard, efforts aimed at securing funds to support small-scale infrastructural rehabilitation work are continuing. Furthermore, the UNMIL quick-impact projects fund has been used to facilitate the rehabilitation and reopening of the law school, enabling some 400 law students to continue their education. The Mission has also provided legal support to various committees and organizations to help build the necessary capacity for promoting and sustaining good governance, transparency and the supremacy of the rule of law. UNMIL has also continued to intensify its monitoring, advisory and evaluation activities in relevant rule-of-law institutions in Monrovia and its environs. Experience in other peacekeeping operations has shown that failing to give due consideration to the issue of judicial reform early in the peace process, has negative ramifications for efforts to strengthen the rule of law. Funding is urgently required to achieve this reform objective.

23. The August-October term of the four criminal courts at the Temple of Justice in Monrovia is under way with a substantial number of cases set for trial. During this period, it is expected that the Supreme Court will rule on 32 cases which came before it during the March term. Of the 16 circuit courts in Liberia, only 11 are considered open, since they have been assigned judges. However, funding for basic operating materials is still needed to enable them to become fully operational. Over 50 magistrate courts are operating throughout the country, albeit with limited resources, which hampers their effectiveness. In the area of juvenile justice, UNMIL is working closely with the Juvenile Court Judge in Monrovia, the Probation Service and social welfare officers. Through their cooperative efforts, a number of illegally detained juveniles have been released into the custody of their relatives, pending hearing of their cases. The Mission is committed to improving the juvenile justice system by collaborating with national counterparts, through education and legal reform initiatives, as well as through the Juvenile Justice Forum, a group of national stakeholders, chaired by the Minister of Justice.

24. As part of its training activities, UNMIL has developed, in collaboration with national and international stakeholders, medium- and long-term training programmes for justices of the peace, magistrates, and circuit and specialized court judges. These training programmes will commence in late August, at which time all the new judicial appointments, as envisaged under the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, would have been finalized. The Mission also plans, in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice, to embark on a programme of drafting and revising laws and intends to organize workshops and public education seminars to help sensitize the public on the new and enhanced role of the judiciary in nation-building and on the importance of the rule of law.

25. The UNMIL corrections component has continued to work with the Ministry of Justice, United Nations agencies and international partners on strengthening the correctional system in Liberia. During the reporting period, a daily average of 190 prisoners were distributed among Monrovia Central, Kakata, Bondiway and Saniquelle prisons, of whom 4 per cent were women and 5 per cent were juveniles. Governmental efforts to provide separate cells for female, male and juvenile prisoners continue to be hampered by limited resources. In addition, the Transitional Government's efforts to provide prisoners with regular meals have not been successful. On 26 August, 26 prisoners in a Liberian National Police detention cell in Monrovia were hospitalized for severe malnutrition and dehydration after some of them were found unconscious in their cell. International agencies are now assisting in the efforts to provide food and other services for the prisoners. The National Transitional Government of Liberia has recently deployed four nurses and supplied some medical equipment to the clinic at the Central Prison in Monrovia. Mentoring and on-the-job training of local corrections staff is progressing, although staff morale is low owing to poor pay and inadequate benefits. UNMIL, in collaboration with other stakeholders, continues to work on the development of a penal reform plan. The conditions in prisons remain dismal and are in need of urgent improvement. UNMIL continues to work closely with donors to address this issue.

VII. Public information

26. The public information component of UNMIL has continued its daily dissemination of information on the mandate and activities of the Mission, with a particular focus on the disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration process. It has conducted several workshops with journalists and media executives that have included participation by the military leadership of the armed factions. It has also begun public sensitization programmes on rehabilitation and reintegration, in collaboration with stakeholders and implementing partners. Reporting by the Liberian media regarding the activities of the Mission has been generally positive, including assessments of the disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration programme. UNMIL Radio has continued to expand its coverage of the country and has produced live broadcasts from Gbarnga, Saniquelle, Ganta and Zwedru.

VIII. Restoration of State authority throughout the country

27. Some progress has been made towards the restoration of State authority throughout the country. The national Task Force for the Restoration of State Authority in the Ministry of Internal Affairs, in collaboration with UNMIL, has developed and begun implementing a programme for the re-establishment of State authority nationwide. The membership of the task force was recently widened to include representatives of the National Transitional Government of Liberia and the National Transitional Legislative Assembly. This followed the decision by the Legislative Assembly to delay the consideration and confirmation of new superintendents and assistant development superintendents nominated in July by Chairman Bryant for five counties, on the basis that the Assembly had not been consulted by the Executive. In view of the Assembly's objections, coupled with protests from county-level leaders, Chairman Bryant withdrew the nominees and requested the Minister of Internal Affairs to undertake a process whereby county-level committees would recommend three candidates for a superintendent position, from among whom the Chairman would select one nominee.

28. Encouraging progress has been made in strengthening the presence of government officials at the borders. On 8 August, UNMIL assisted in the deployment of officials from the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization to Bo Waterside and Ganta, which are main crossing points on the border with Sierra Leone and Guinea, respectively. UNMIL also assisted in the deployment of immigration and customs officials to Voinjama and Loguatuo. Additionally, the Bureau of Internal Revenue has deployed 107 out of a projected 350 revenue collectors, to locations including Kakata, Marshall, Bensonville, Buchanan, Gbarnga, Salala, Robertsport, Saniquelle and Ganta. Planning is also under way to restore postal services and establish banks in some of these towns. While the deployments of governmental officials is a welcome development, the lack of adequate office facilities, equipment and other logistical support continues to seriously hamper their ability to function effectively.

29. Civil affairs officers are now deployed in all 15 counties, where they are engaging in activities in support of the restoration of State authority and the revival of government institutions. In this regard, valuable technical assistance is being provided by civil affairs officers co-located in government ministries and other institutions. Civil affairs officers and their local interlocutors are also engaged in developing profiles of the status of government institutions in each county, which will be used to assist in the restoration of State authority, as well as in recovery and development planning activities. They are also increasingly involved in arbitrating housing and property disputes, through ad hoc committees established to resolve such disputes, as refugees and internally displaced persons continue to return to their home communities. They are also undertaking negotiations with members of the armed factions aimed at ensuring that they vacate State-owned buildings.

30. Following the signing of a memorandum of understanding between UNDP and the Governance Reform Commission in June, public sector reform activities have increased. UNMIL has provided the Commission with county profiles, while UNDP has provided office equipment to 13 key government ministries and other institutions to assist them in restoring basic capacity. Work is at a very early stage in this critical area and will require the significant engagement of the donor community. It is essential that State authority is restored throughout the country to

ensure the maintenance of security, to establish the conditions for the holding of free and fair presidential and legislative elections in October 2005 and to ensure the transparent and proper management of the country's considerable natural resources.

IX. Elections

31. On 31 May, representatives of ECOWAS, UNMIL and the National Elections Commission attended a meeting in Abuja to clarify certain provisions of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement relating to the electoral process. It was agreed that the National Elections Commission would be responsible for the conduct of the elections and that the United Nations would take the lead in coordinating all electoral assistance for the Commission.

32. Subsequently, on 7 and 8 June, a consultative meeting was convened by the National Elections Commission in Monrovia, attended by representatives of all the signatories of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, with the exception of MODEL. The discussions focused on whether the October 2005 elections would be limited to presidential and legislative elections or would also include local elections; the type of electoral system to be used; reform of the electoral laws; and re-demarcation of constituencies, in view of the creation of new counties under the Government of former President Taylor. It became clear from these consultations that many of Liberia's stakeholders did not support a proportional representation system, as utilized during the 1997 elections, instead favouring a constituency-based, "first past the post", system. They also favoured the holding of local elections prior to the national elections. However, since there is insufficient time to conduct a census prior to the October 2005 elections, and as there is no agreement on the boundaries for local administrations within the counties, there is general consensus that the local elections would take place after the presidential and legislative elections and after the elected government had taken office.

33. On 30 August, the National Elections Commission submitted the draft electoral reform legislation to the National Transitional Legislative Assembly. The draft legislation contains provisions for a constituency-based election for the House of Representatives. Its adoption by the Legislative Assembly would open the way for the voter education programme to become fully operational. The nationwide voter registration exercise is expected to commence in April 2005 and to proceed for around five weeks. The draft legislation empowers the National Elections Commission to adopt any necessary measures to facilitate the registration and polling of internally displaced persons and refugees.

34. The National Elections Commission, international donors, the Transitional Government of Liberia and UNMIL are continuing to discuss modalities for funding the elections, the budget for which has been estimated to be approximately $12 million. In this connection, it would be prudent for UNMIL to request a budgetary allocation for polling costs in its 2005-2006 budget submission, in anticipation of further voluntary contributions, to ensure that the elections take place on time and in a credible manner. In the meantime, the electoral component of UNMIL is being strengthened and will continue to assist the National Elections Commission in its restructuring and operational planning efforts in preparation for voter registration and polling.

X. Human rights and protection of civilians

35. The human rights and protection component of UNMIL has continued its promotion, protection and monitoring activities in areas of the country where State authority has been established. The component has been involved in the drafting of the enabling legislation for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In this regard, a series of national consultations was conducted by UNMIL in collaboration with a local non-governmental organization, the Transitional Justice Working Group, which culminated in a workshop, held in Monrovia from 27 July to 13 August. Issues addressed included the powers and functions of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the treatment of women and children, reparations and the rehabilitation of victims, the granting of amnesties and the appointment of Commissioners. The draft act is currently being reviewed by the Transitional Government, after which it will be submitted to the Legislative Assembly for enactment. Meanwhile, UNMIL and UNDP have continued to support consultations with the Transitional Government, the judiciary, civil society and other stakeholders on the work of the Independent National Commission on Human Rights and on the development of a national action plan on human rights. Consultations have focused on the vision, mission and objectives of the Commission, including its relationship with human rights organizations and the incorporation of best practices.

36. As part of ongoing efforts to verify that recruits for the Liberian National Police do not have criminal records, UNMIL has established an "integrity bank", which compiles background information on candidates that can be used to assist in their screening by the Liberian National Law Enforcement Association.

37. While considerable work has been done in the area of human rights, there has, admittedly, been some delay in the recruitment of qualified personnel. It is therefore important that the process of identifying, recruiting and inducting human rights personnel be accelerated in the coming weeks.

XI. The humanitarian situation

38. As security has improved and disarmament has progressed, more personnel from UNMIL, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations have been deployed to the field, resulting in improvements in the delivery of relief aid to communities that had previously been inaccessible.

39. The deployment of peacekeepers to Saclepea, Gbarnga, Tubmanburg, Voinjama and Zwedru has enabled the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to increase border-monitoring activities, initiate community-based assistance projects and prepare for the facilitated return of refugees from neighbouring countries, which is scheduled to start in October. UNHCR has established offices in Tubmanburg, Voinjama, Gbarnga, Saclepea, Zwedru and Harper. A regional repatriation meeting was organized by UNHCR in July in Monrovia to discuss technical modalities and protection issues to ensure the safe return of refugees. According to an inter-agency survey issued in May, there were some 260,000 internally displaced persons in camps in the country. However, this number would have further increased in the past several weeks owing to the ongoing spontaneous return of Liberians from neighbouring countries. In this connection, an estimated 50,000 refugees have returned to their home communities

since August 2003. UNMIL and UNHCR are assisting the Transitional Government in implementing the National Community Resettlement and Reintegration Strategy.

40. As areas in the interior of the country have increasingly become accessible, UNMIL has continued to expand its quick-impact projects programme. The principal area of focus remains schools located in parts of the country where the disarmament exercise has made substantial progress, in order to facilitate the reinsertion of child ex-combatants into the education system. As at 30 August, UNMIL had approved 99 quick-impact projects costing $1,047,706, of which 49 have been completed at a cost of $438,389. These projects were in the areas of education, health, public sanitation and shelter rehabilitation. UNMIL is also facilitating contacts with donors regarding funding for the reconstruction of Liberia's electricity and telecommunication sectors, as well as for road rehabilitation.

41. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has continued its efforts to protect and support vulnerable communities and groups, including women and children in armed conflict. As at 30 August, 6,403 children associated with the fighting forces had been disarmed and demobilized and more than 5,413 successfully reunified with their families. In addition, from 1 September, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is scheduled to repatriate foreign children associated with the fighting forces to their homes in Guinea, Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire, in accordance with a memorandum of understanding signed by ICRC and UNMIL. In addition, child protection agencies are providing interim care services to 970 children associated with the fighting forces who remain in the interim care centres while their families are being traced. Ten drop-in-centres are expected to open in phase 3 of the disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration process, to provide psychosocial support, recreational activities and protection services for such children who have returned to their home communities. Similarly, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is providing support to protect women against sexual and gender-based violence, which includes trauma counselling in cantonment sites and host communities. Social workers, supported by UNFPA, are also raising awareness on sexual and gender-based violence.

42. The "Back to school" campaign continues to make steady progress. UNICEF has delivered more than 10,000 emergency school supply kits for 800,000 children and has trained 12,000 primary school teachers. UNICEF has also helped to install 432 water points and basic sanitation facilities in 519 schools and, subject to adequate donor support, aims to cover water and sanitation needs in remaining schools by the end of the year. The World Food Programme (WFP) school feeding programmes have reached 395,510 children in 1,065 schools, and it is envisaged that the programme will be expanded to cover a total caseload of 460,000 school children by December. UNICEF accelerated learning programmes and child-friendly spaces in camps for internally displaced persons are providing educational activities and integrated early childhood development programmes for 11,000 children. Through a joint initiative of UNICEF and UNMIL, military observers in Voinjama, Zwedru and Ganta are being trained on how best to deal with children associated with the fighting forces. UNICEF has also completed a thorough needs assessment for water and sanitation in 10 counties and learning spaces in 12 counties.

43. Food aid remains vital to meet the immediate needs of vulnerable population groups in Liberia. In June and July, WFP distributed a total of 14,160 metric tons of

food in 11 of the 15 counties, to an average of 827,000 beneficiaries per month. Owing to food pipeline constraints, WFP was forced to reduce general food rations starting from June in order to provide all registered beneficiaries with available resources. WFP is also working closely with UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO) to increase the capacity of the National Transitional Government of Liberia to integrate food assistance with health care. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and WFP have been collaborating to revive the agriculture sector in several counties.

44. In order to facilitate monitoring and collaboration with health partners at the county level, WHO is providing logistical support for county health teams. The national immunization programme, which is continuing with the participation of UNICEF, WHO and other partners, has already reached 95 per cent of its target figure, having immunized 1,500,000 children against measles.

45. Owing to the lack of safe drinking water and sanitation facilities in many counties, water borne diseases, including outbreaks of cholera, have been reported in Montserrado and Maryland counties. WHO is working with the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare to improve the quality of drinking water. Given the endemic nature of cholera, WHO is also introducing the local production of chlorine as a sustainable and long-term option. UNICEF, in partnership with the Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy, has rehabilitated the central water-testing laboratory and is providing support for the monitoring of water quality, as well as for the development of an early warning system for cholera hotspots. The $2 million Emergency Relief Fund set up by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs is facilitating emergency humanitarian interventions by non-governmental organizations to re-establish basic living conditions for communities hosting internally displaced persons and other vulnerable populations. UNMIL environment and natural resources advisers are also working with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), UNDP, the Transitional Government and non-governmental organizations to assist the Government to restore proper administration of natural resources.

46. Following a series of consultations, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Liberia was formally integrated into UNMIL in July. This has served to strengthen humanitarian coordination, strategic planning for the return of internally displaced persons and refugees, and aid delivery. Coordination between United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations is also enhanced through the Humanitarian Action Committee, which continues to meet on a weekly basis to provide strategic direction and substantive guidance to the humanitarian community on a broad range of issues. Additionally, UNMIL holds a weekly humanitarian briefing for non-governmental organizations in Liberia.

47. Following a mid-year review, the 2004 inter-agency Consolidated Appeal Process review document was presented to donors in early June. Only about 38 per cent of the $137 million requested for the non-food component has been provided thus far. In view of the shortfall in funding, the United Nations country team is pursuing an innovative approach aimed at integrating outstanding humanitarian needs into the results focused transition framework, which is due for revision by the end of 2004. Instead of a consolidated appeal for 2005 being issued, humanitarian needs would be reflected in the appropriate clusters of the framework and would be clearly distinguished from the transitional and development objectives. This option

would not only offer a more effective means of reflecting the inter-linkages between repatriation, reintegration, rehabilitation and reconstruction, but would also provide potential donors with a more coherent and consolidated package of funding requirements. I would appeal for donors to provide resources to ensure that the humanitarian needs in the country can be met, particularly as resettlement needs increase, and populations in previously inaccessible areas can be assisted.

XII. HIV/AIDS

48. UNDP has signed three grants totalling $24 million for the implementation of capacity-building initiatives and activities to increase access to care, support and treatment for people living with HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. It has also funded the purchase of $50,000 worth of anti-retroviral drugs, which are being used in the treatment of over 300 patients. UNMIL is working together with UNDP to provide support, in partnership with the United Nations Theme Group on HIV/AIDS, for the revision of the National Strategic Plan of Action for HIV/AIDS. In addition, UNFPA has increased its support to border villages in Lofa and Grand Cape counties to combat sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS, as well as to create awareness on sexual and gender-based violence. Within the Mission, the HIV/AIDS component has continued sensitization and awareness training of incoming civilian, civilian police and military personnel. It is also collaborating with other United Nations partners in the training of peer educators.

XIII. National recovery

49. Since the International Reconstruction Conference on Liberia in February, the Results Focused Transition Framework Monitoring Committee, which is headed by Chairman Bryant and includes representatives of the National Transitional Government of Liberia, UNMIL, the World Bank and UNDP, has been overseeing implementation of the framework. A joint progress review of the framework has been undertaken and a report is being finalized for presentation at a donors' meeting on 24 September in Washington, D.C.

50. As at 30 August, approximately $244 million of the $520 million pledged at the international conference had been received. Of this amount, $121.1 million is earmarked for humanitarian activities and $122.9 for reconstruction activities. The Core Group on Liberia, comprising donor countries and international organizations, met in Washington, D.C. on 20 July to review the status of donor pledges and progress in reconstruction and recovery. It noted that there were pressing funding needs for the reintegration of ex-combatants, for the strengthening of rule-of-law institutions and also for the organization of the October 2005 elections. The Group emphasized the need for donors to do everything possible to accelerate the fulfilment of pledges made at the International Reconstruction Conference on Liberia. The successful implementation of the results focused transition framework will require the continuing support of the international community and effective coordination among the stakeholders. Without a sustained economic recovery, including the creation of job opportunities and greatly increased State-generated income, the prospects for sustaining the peace process in the long term will remain very fragile.

XIV. Regional aspects

51. During the reporting period, ECOWAS, in close coordination with the United Nations, has made commendable efforts to resolve the differences between Chairman Bryant and the representatives of the armed factions within the National Transitional Government of Liberia. On 30 July, in the margins of the high-level meeting on Côte d'Ivoire in Accra, ECOWAS held a meeting on Liberia which was attended by Presidents Obasanjo of Nigeria, Kufuor of Ghana, Mbeki of South Africa and Eyadema of Togo, as well as representatives of ECOWAS, Chairman Bryant and representatives of LURD and MODEL. On the same day, ECOWAS Ministers for Foreign Affairs met with representatives of the armed groups and Chairman Bryant. These meetings focused on issues related to the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and concluded with Chairman Bryant agreeing to consult more fully with representatives of the factions and to hold cabinet meetings more regularly.

52. Commendable progress continues to be made towards improving mutual cooperation and enhancing relations among the Mano River Union countries. President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah of Sierra Leone visited Liberia on 22 and 26 July to consult with Chairman Bryant on security issues in the Mano River Union countries. On 18 August, Chairman Bryant visited Sierra Leone and discussed with President Kabbah subregional security matters and also Sierra Leone's experience in the post-conflict recovery process. Following the meeting, the two leaders renewed their commitment to reviving the Mano River Union and called for the enforcement of the Non-Aggression and Security Cooperation Treaty between Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

53. The Force Commanders of UNMIL, the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire and the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone met in Monrovia on 10 June to discuss the security situation in the border areas and to exchange views on inter-mission cooperation and cross-border activities. Pursuant to the statement issued by the President of the Security Council on 25 March 2004 (S/PRST/2004/7), in which reference was made to the need to strengthen cooperation among the three peacekeeping operations, an integrated report is currently being prepared for submission to the Council later this year. In the meantime, practical cooperation among the Missions is continuing, especially in areas such as information-sharing, cross-border liaison, the transfer of surplus assets and the exchange of support personnel.

XV. Mission support

54. The administrative component of UNMIL has been engaged in renovating and building offices for its civilian, police and military personnel located outside of Monrovia. It has also completed the construction of three new disarmament and demobilization camps, located in Zwedru, Ganta and Voinjama. In addition, it has commenced the construction of a final cantonment camp in Harper and of accommodation facilities for military personnel. Apart from its more general support functions, the Mission has also provided logistical support to newly arrived contingents in need of temporary rations or equipment. As at 30 August, the international civilian staff complement of UNMIL stood at 423 out of an authorized strength of 635, or 67 per cent of the total, of whom 29.14 per cent are women.

XVI. Financial aspects

55. In its resolution 58/261 B of 18 June 2004, the General Assembly decided to appropriate the amount of $864,815,900 (gross), equivalent to $72,067,991 per month, for UNMIL for the period 1 July 2004-30 June 2005. The assessment of these amounts is subject to the decision of the Security Council to extend the mandate of the Mission. In the same resolution, the General Assembly decided to apportion among Member States the additional amount of $114,494,300 (gross) already appropriated for the maintenance of the Mission for the period 1 August 2003-30 June 2004 under the terms of its resolution 58/261 A of 23 December 2003. Should the Security Council decide to extend the mandate of UNMIL beyond 30 September 2004, the cost of maintaining the Mission until 30 June 2005 would be limited to the monthly amounts approved by the General Assembly.

56. As at 31 July 2004, unpaid assessed contributions to the UNMIL Special Account amounted to $444 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations at that date amounted to $2,478 million.

XVII. Observations

57. UNMIL has continued to make progress in stabilizing Liberia and creating the necessary security conditions for the full implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. The deployment of UNMIL troops throughout the country is nearing completion and significant strides have been made in disarming and demobilizing combatants. The consequent improvement in the security situation has greatly facilitated the delivery of humanitarian assistance and progress towards the restoration of State authority throughout the country. The Mission continues to support the rehabilitation of Liberia's legal and judicial institutions, as well as its corrections system. The programme for the restructuring and reform of the country's security sector has made good strides with the reopening of the Police Academy, the commencement of training for new police recruits and the enhancement of the activities of the Liberia National Police, both in Monrovia and in the interior of the country.

58. Despite these significant achievements, many challenges still lie ahead. The capacity of the National Transitional Government of Liberia to deliver basic services and extend civil administration throughout the country remains limited. The process of restoring effective administrative structures will require continuing engagement by development partners, in terms of the provision of both technical experts and funds, to make possible the necessary rehabilitation and equipping of government institutions and to strengthen administrative capacity.

59. Furthermore, I remain concerned at the problems that the National Transitional Government of Liberia is encountering in functioning as a cohesive administration. Protracted disputes, including over claims by some ministers that individuals from their respective factions should be nominated to key government and parastatal positions, have hindered the effective functioning of the Transitional Government. The continuing divisions within LURD, which have led to violent incidents between opposing elements in Monrovia and elsewhere, are also a destabilizing factor, which urgently needs to be resolved. At this critical juncture, the parties concerned should put the national interest above personal interests and ensure that differences are

resolved so that the restoration of stability in the country can proceed without delay. All Liberian parties must work together in a spirit of cooperation and reconciliation to ensure the consolidation of much-needed peace in Liberia. UNMIL will continue to work with ECOWAS leaders in assisting the parties to overcome problems that threaten to hinder the peace process.

60. The rehabilitation and reintegration phase of the disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration programme is a vital core element in the process of ensuring durable peace in Liberia and in enhancing subregional security and stability. The ex-combatants constitute a highly volatile group of unemployed youth with little or no education or job skills, for whom the provision of training, education and work opportunities is urgently needed. As the completion of the disarmament and demobilization phases nears, there are some 70,000 ex-combatants seeking to benefit from the reintegration programme, which is currently experiencing a serious funding shortfall. In this regard, I wish to express appreciation to donors that have already made contributions and also urgently call for further generous pledges from the international community to the UNDP Trust Fund for Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration to ensure that the reintegration process, which is absolutely critical for the success of the peace process, is adequate, effective and completed in a timely manner.

61. It is gratifying to note that the ongoing collaboration between UNMIL and ECOWAS has contributed significantly to the progress which has been achieved in the Liberian peace process. I welcome the establishment of a high-level National Transitional Government of Liberia-United Nations-ECOWAS consultative mechanism, which will hold a special meeting in New York on 20 September. The mechanism should constitute a very useful forum for the further development of a common strategy in support of the peace process. The peace process in Liberia would also benefit from enhancement of cooperation in the security, economic and development spheres through the revitalization of the Mano River Union. In this regard, I trust that the momentum generated by the summit of the three Member States held in May, will be further built upon in the coming months.

62. I have been pleased to note the progress that has been made by the National Elections Commission, in collaboration with UNMIL and other international partners, towards the organization of the presidential and legislative elections in October 2005. However, much remains to be done and I appeal to the international community to provide the necessary resources to ensure that the National Elections Commission can fulfil its mandate to conduct free and fair elections as scheduled.

63. UNMIL is now moving into a new phase of its operations, during which there will be particular focus on rehabilitation and reintegration of ex-combatants and community development; the restoration of State administration nationwide; the strengthening of the rule-of-law institutions and restructuring of the security sector; promotion of the process of recovery and reconstruction; and the organization of free and fair elections in October 2005. In the light of the above, I would recommend that the mandate of UNMIL be extended for a period of 12 months until 19 September 2005.

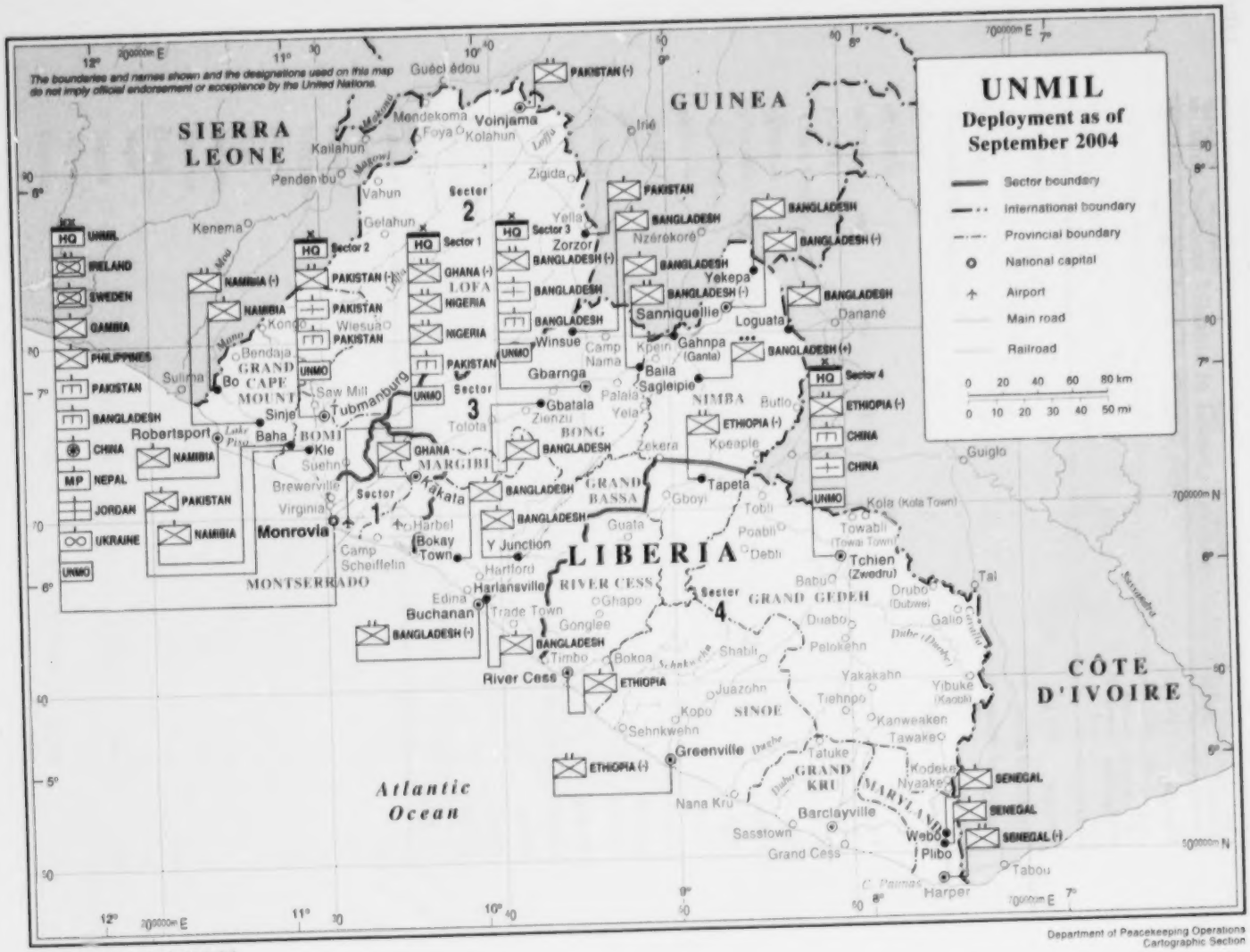
64. In conclusion, I would like to commend my Special Representative and the civilian and military staff of UNMIL for the progress they have accomplished during the period under review. I would also like to express my appreciation to the countries that are contributing troops and police personnel to the Mission, as well as to ECOWAS leaders, members of the International Contact Group on Liberia, United Nations agencies, humanitarian organizations and numerous bilateral donors for their steadfast continuing efforts in support of the peace process in Liberia.

Annex

United Nations Mission in Liberia: military and civilian police strength as at 30 August 2004

Countries	*Military Observers*	*Staff Officers*	*Troops*	*Military Component Total*	*Civilian Police Component Total*
Bangladesh	17	11	3 186	3 214	24
Benin	3	1		4	
Bolivia	3	1		4	
Bosnia and Herzegovina					17
Brazil		1		1	
Bulgaria	2			2	
China	5	9	557	571	25
Croatia		3		3	
Czech Republic	3			3	3
Denmark	3			3	
Ecuador	3	1		4	
El Salvador	3			3	
Ethiopia	17	8	2 561	2 586	
Egypt	8			8	
Fiji					30
Finland		2		2	
France		1		1	
Gambia	5		150	155	30
Ghana	11	3	847	861	36
Guinea-Bissau				0	
Indonesia	3			3	
Ireland		5	427	432	
Jamaica					10
Jordan	7	9	115	131	134
Kenya	3	4		7	5
Kyrgyzstan	4			4	3
Malawi		2		2	19
Mali	5	2		7	
Malaysia	10			10	
Namibia	3	4	827	834	6
Nepal	3	1	40	44	255
Niger	2			2	4
Nigeria	18	14	1 628	1 660	152
Norway					6
Pakistan	16	9	2 739	2 764	25

Countries	*Military Observers*	*Staff Officers*	*Troops*	*Military Component Total*	*Civilian Police Component Total*
Paraguay	3	1		4	
Peru	4	2		6	
Philippines	3	2	147	152	30
Poland	2			2	3
Portugal					2
Republic of Korea	1	1		2	
Republic of Moldova	3	1		4	
Romania	3			3	
Russian Federation	6			6	20
Samoa					20
Senegal	3	3	600	606	10
Serbia and Montenegro	6			6	8
South Africa		3		3	
Sri Lanka					11
Sweden		3	223	226	6
Togo		1		1	
Turkey					34
United Kingdom		3		3	
Uganda					20
Ukraine	3	1	297	301	11
Uruguay					2
United States of America	6	6		12	73
Yemen					2
Zambia	3			3	24
Zimbabwe					30
Total	**203**	**118**	**14 344**	**14 665**	**1 090**



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